

Chapter 10: Local Government Services in the Delta

1 Overview and Key Findings

This chapter addresses the complexities of providing important government services to various geographic areas of the Delta, providing a context for analysis of the underlying fiscal issues associated with improving public services in the future. Based on this services review, the Economic Sustainability Plan will recommend strategies to address public service issues and associated funding challenges, the goal being overall improvement of the economic health of the Delta.

In this chapter we examine critical local government services, focusing on 1) law enforcement, 2) fire protection/first response, and 3) educational services. The chapter first considers the overall framework for the provision these public services then provides a detailed assessment of services in unincorporated Sacramento and Yolo counties, where the Legacy Communities are located. Following the review of existing conditions, the chapter will explore the major issues associated with providing adequate services to this rural area and consider potential service impacts associated with the policy proposals.

Note to reviewers: this section to be developed

2 Approach

The local governance structure in the Delta is complex, with a multifaceted network of counties, cities, special districts, state agencies, and other service providers. To establish existing conditions and major issues associated with government services in the Delta, the analysis includes a review of budgetary documents and interviews with representatives from the service providers. Through this process, the analysis endeavors to identify the following:

- Services provided
- Service providers and associated service areas
- Service levels and backup support systems
- Service funding sources and funding trends
- Potential improvements in the provision of services

To date, research concerning government services has included review of available budgetary and governance documents, and outreach to various service providers in order to better understand existing conditions. Due to the rural nature and limited data regarding the government services in the Delta, the analysis will rely heavily on information derived from interviews. Table 44 details the status of interviews that inform the findings of the government services review.

Note to reviewers: additional information will be incorporated based on future interviews with service providers.

Table 44 Status of Government Services Interviews

Service Provider	Contact	Status
Law Enforcement Agencies		
Sacramento County Sheriff	Sgt. Mayberry, Marine Patrol Budget analyst	Left message; awaiting callback Left message; awaiting callback
Yolo County Sheriff	Sgt. Williams, Marine Patrol Budget analyst	Interview completed Contact not yet made
Fire Protection		
Clarksburg Fire Protection District	Unknown	Left message; awaiting callback
Courtland Fire Protection District	Unknown	Contact not yet made
River Delta Fire Protection District	Unknown	Left message; awaiting callback
Montezume Hills Fire Protection District	Unknown	Contact not yet made
Rio Vista Fire District	Unknown	Left message; awaiting callback
Educational Services		
River Delta School District	Superintendent's office Budget analyst	Interview completed Contact not yet made

3 Current Status and Trends

In general, California's local governance system is complex, with counties, cities, special districts, and school districts providing public services:

- Counties serve as agents of the state for social services and health programs; provide countywide services (e.g., jails, district attorney, assessor, and elections); and supply municipal services in unincorporated areas. In general, California counties are funded primarily by intergovernmental transfers (primarily from the state and federal sources) as well as property, sales, and other taxes.¹²⁸
- Cities control local land use and municipal services. Some cities provide a wide range of municipal services (e.g., police, fire, parks, and library) while other cities rely on their county or special districts to provide some of these services. City funding generally comes from local taxes, fees, and service charges.
- Special Districts usually provide a single service (e.g., fire protection or waste disposal) within specified boundaries that often cross city and county borders. To pay for their regular operations, special districts generate revenue from taxes, benefit assessments, and service charges.¹²⁹
- K-12 and Community College Districts provide educational services at the local level. School districts receive funding from the state (including the state lottery), local sources, and the federal government.¹³⁰

There are 14 cities and 6 counties wholly or partially located within the Legal Delta, including:

¹²⁸ Legislative Analyst's Office

(http://www.lao.ca.gov/handouts/Conf_Comm/2010/Overview_CA_Local_Gov_6_15_10.pdf)

¹²⁹ California Special Districts Association

(http://www.csda.net/index.php?option=com_remository&Itemid=247&func=startdown&id=12)

¹³⁰ Timar, 2006 ([http://irepp.stanford.edu/documents/GDF/STUDIES/02-Timar/2-Timar\(3-07\).pdf](http://irepp.stanford.edu/documents/GDF/STUDIES/02-Timar/2-Timar(3-07).pdf))

Delta Cities

Antioch
 Brentwood
 Isleton
 Lathrop
 Lodi
 Manteca
 Oakley
 Pittsburg
 Rio Vista
 Sacramento
 Stockton
 Tracy
 West Sacramento

Delta Counties

Alameda
 Contra Costa
 Sacramento
 San Joaquin
 Solano
 Yolo

With no incorporated cities within the Primary Zone, these rural areas receive services from a wide assortment of service providers, as shown in Table 45 below. In addition, service providers from outside the Primary Zone may provide backup support for large-scale incidents.

Table 45 Government Service Providers in Delta Primary Zone

Primary Zone County	Law Enforcement	Fire Protection/ First Responders	Schools
Sacramento County	Sacramento County Sheriff	River Delta Fire District Courtland Fire Department	River Delta School District
Yolo County	Yolo County Sheriff	Clarksburg Fire Protection District	River Delta School District
San Joaquin County	San Joaquin County Sheriff	Montezuma Hills Fire Protection District	Tracy Unified School District Lincoln Unified
Solano County	Solano County Sheriff	Rio Vista Fire Department	Farfield Suisun Unified
Contra Costa County	Contra Costa County Sheriff	East Contra Costa Fire Protection District	Knighten Elementary School District Liberty Union High School District Oakley Union Elementary

In the Secondary Zone, cities generally handle their own police and fire protection. School districts provide educational services throughout the Legal Delta. In unincorporated areas, law enforcement services are generally provided by the county Sheriff's offices, and fire protection/first response services are generally provided by small (largely volunteer) regional fire protection districts. Table 46 presents a list of service providers within the geographic range of the secondary zone.

Table 46 Public Safety Service Providers – Delta Secondary Zone

Police	Fire
Contra Costa County Sheriff	Stockton Fire Department
Alameda County Sheriff	Tracy Fire Department
Sacramento County Sheriff	Thornton Fire District
Yolo County Sheriff	Contra Costa County Fire Protection District
San Joaquin County Sheriff	Cosumnes Fire Department
Solano County Sheriff	Lathrop Manteca Fire District
Sacramento PD	Cal Fire SCU (Santa Clara)
Stockton PD	Rio Vista Fire Department
Elk Grove PD	City of West Sacramento Fire Department
Antioch PD	Davis Fire Department
Pittsburg PD	East Contra Costa Fire Protection District
Tracy PD	Montezuma Hills Fire District
Galt PD	Ryer Island Fire Protection District
Lathrop PD	

Due to the scale and complexity of government services in the Delta, this chapter focuses on public services provided by Sacramento and Yolo counties, with emphasis on assessing service levels in the Legacy Communities.

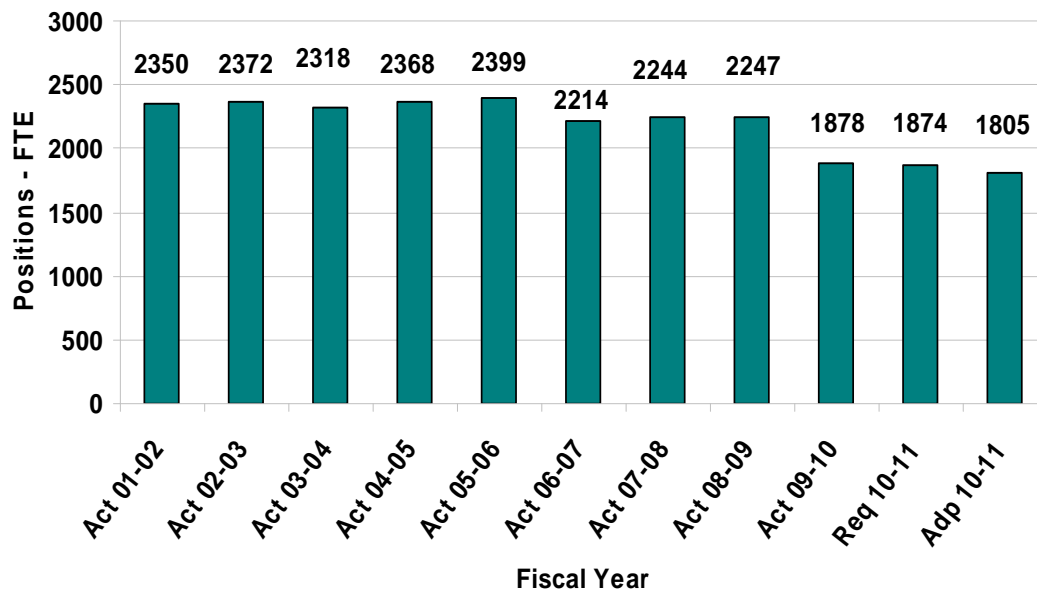
3.1 Law Enforcement and Emergency Response Services

County sheriff's departments provide police protection and public safety services to unincorporated county areas in the Delta. In addition, both Sacramento and Yolo counties maintain a marine patrol. Since these County sheriff's departments are responsible for providing protection for very large areas and population bases, it is very difficult to distinguish the budgetary issues that are specific to the small Delta communities. However, it is anticipated that interviews with the various County Sheriff's departments will provide a better understanding of the staffing requirements and service provision issues for the rural Delta areas.

3.1.1 Sacramento County Sheriff's Department

In Sacramento County, the Sheriff's Department is responsible for public protection and support services, field investigations, and correctional and court services. The Sheriff's Department is currently staffed with 1,805 positions. This staffing level is significantly fewer than five years earlier, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 36 Sacramento County Sheriff's Department Staffing Trend



Source: Sacramento County

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Department has an adopted total budget amount of \$330.4 million for the 2010/11 fiscal year, which is approximately 5 percent higher than the previous year's actual budget. Nearly 80 percent of this budget is allocated to employee salaries and benefits.

The Sacramento County Sheriff's Office operates a Marine Enforcement unit that patrols the Sacramento River and other navigable waterways of Sacramento County. This patrol unit is operating on an annual budget allocation of approximately \$405,000 (FY 2010/11), which funds the salary for three full-time staff members. This unit patrols Delta waterways and enforces boating safety laws, provides educational enforcement, and is responsible for the removal of abandoned vessels (through a statewide grant).

3.1.2 Yolo County Sheriff-Coroner

In Yolo County, the Sheriff's Department provides police patrol services, animal shelter/control, the County Coroner's section, and the operation of the county detention facilities. The Sheriff's Department has a recommended total budget of \$26.5 million for the 2010/11 fiscal year, which is 7 percent lower than the prior year. The budget reduction is primarily the result of reducing 30 available beds at the Leinberger Detention Facility, resulting in the elimination of funding for eight positions. Furthermore, four employees in the department have opted to retire, the budget includes eight layoffs, and 14 positions will remain vacant and unfunded. Nearly 85 percent of this budget is allocated to salaries and benefits, which funds 243 of the total 267 authorized positions in the Department. The Sheriff's Department is funded through a variety of sources, including charges for services, state/federal grants, public safety sales tax, and local general fund appropriations (which are comprised primarily of property tax and sales tax).

Yolo County operates a Marine Patrol unit which is currently staffed by two full-time officers and six volunteer patrol personnel. The Marine Patrol unit is primarily funded through a grant by the

U.S. Department of Boating and Waterways, although some County general fund revenue is generally allocated in normal budget years. Currently, staffing levels are reduced due to budgetary constraints.

3.1.3 Other Law Enforcement Service Providers

Other service providers offer supplemental backup public safety and police protection on an as-needed basis. For example, the City of Rio Vista has indicated that City services are sometimes extended to underserved areas of the Delta.

Note to reviewers: verification and additional information required

3.2 Fire Protection/ First Response

The rural nature of the Delta does not necessitate the need for urban levels of fire protection services, and the fire protection responsibilities are distributed to several small fire protection districts that are spread throughout the Delta region.

Note to reviewers: map to be provided

3.2.1 Clarksburg Fire Protection/First Responders

Fire Protection, emergency response, and emergency flood protection services in the Clarksburg area are provided by the Clarksburg Fire Protection District Department, which has seven staff members and 20 volunteers. According to the district, this level of staffing appears to be adequate at the current time, but up to twice this many employees could be needed by 2020. The Clarksburg Fire Protection District is largely funded by property taxes and fire suppression assessments, although grants and fundraisers also augment funding for the district.

Note to reviewers: additional detailed budgetary and staffing information has been requested

3.2.2 River Delta Fire District

The River Delta Fire District was formally established in May 2004, having previously been known as the Isleton Fire District, which was formed in 1941. The River Delta Fire District covers approximately 15 square miles, is centered on the community of Isleton, and includes Oxbow Marina, Tyler Island, Grand Island, and a large portion of Brannon Island. This service area is comprised of approximately 1,500 full-time residents, which can swell to 15,000 people in the summer months as visitors come to the area for recreational purposes.

The district functions as a volunteer station, and there are currently 28 volunteers, which allows the department to be staffed 24 hours a day 7 days a week, and to respond to various emergencies such as structure fires, vehicle fires, grass fires, boat fires, medical calls, vehicle accidents, floods, levee breaks, etc. Because of the rural nature of this area, this station provides an extremely important function in emergency situations. The district states that there are approximately 325 emergency calls per year.

Note to reviewers: information regarding funding required

3.2.3 Courtland Fire Department

The Courtland Fire Department was established on January 25, 1942. It is governed by a three-member Board of Directors who are elected to four-year terms. The Courtland Fire Protection District covers over 33 square miles, which is comprised of over 2,500 citizens in the rural areas of Sacramento County. The Courtland Fire Department also provides mutual assistance to Elk Grove, Walnut Grove, and Sacramento. The Courtland Fire Department maintains two fire stations, one located in Courtland and the other in Hood. The Courtland Fire Department has over 22 uniformed volunteer firefighters who provide fire protection services such as fire suppression, emergency medical services, hazardous materials mitigation, fire prevention, training and public education, and apparatus maintenance. The Courtland Fire Department is primarily funded by property tax revenue.

3.2.4 Other Fire Suppression/First Responders

In addition, nearby cities such as West Sacramento, Rio Vista, and others provide relief fire suppression and emergency services to Delta communities when warranted.

Note to reviewers: verification and additional information required

3.3 Educational Services

The River Delta School District provides educational services for a large portion of the Primary Zone, including all of the Legacy Communities. The district's boundaries include portions of Yolo, Sacramento, and Solano counties. Students who reside in other areas of the Primary Zone (in either San Joaquin or Contra Costa counties) generally attend schools in one of the following districts:

- Tracy Unified
- Stockton Unified
- Lodi Unified
- Lincoln Unified
- Manteca Unified

The River Delta School District is currently comprised of ten school sites, including five elementary schools, two middle schools, two high schools, and one high/elementary (alternative school). These schools are located in the following Delta communities:

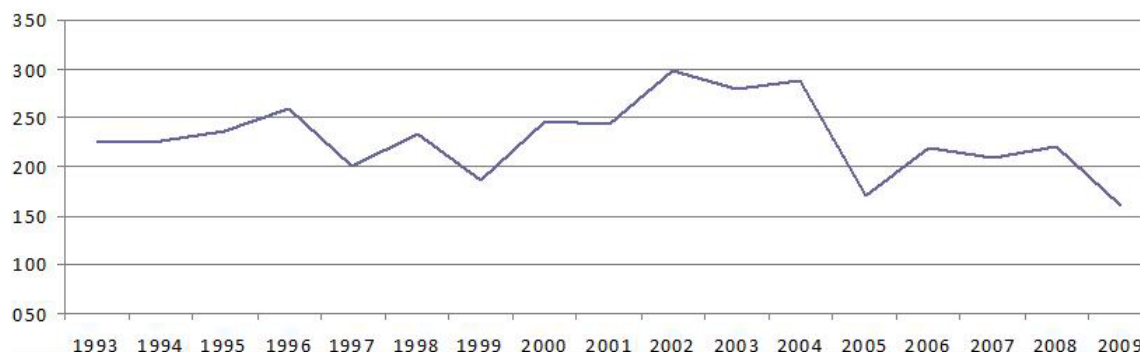
- Clarksburg
- Courtland
- Walnut Grove
- Isleton
- Rio Vista

3.3.1 Enrollment

The River Delta School District has seen fluctuations in enrollment over the past 20 years; however, enrollment has generally ranged between 2,150 and 2,300 students. According to school district representatives, the current enrollment for the River Delta Unified School District is at 2020, which is the lowest level of enrollment in the district's recent history. This trend is

consistent with socioeconomic analysis presented in Chapter 2, which identified that population growth in the Primary Zone is flat, and the existing households are aging.

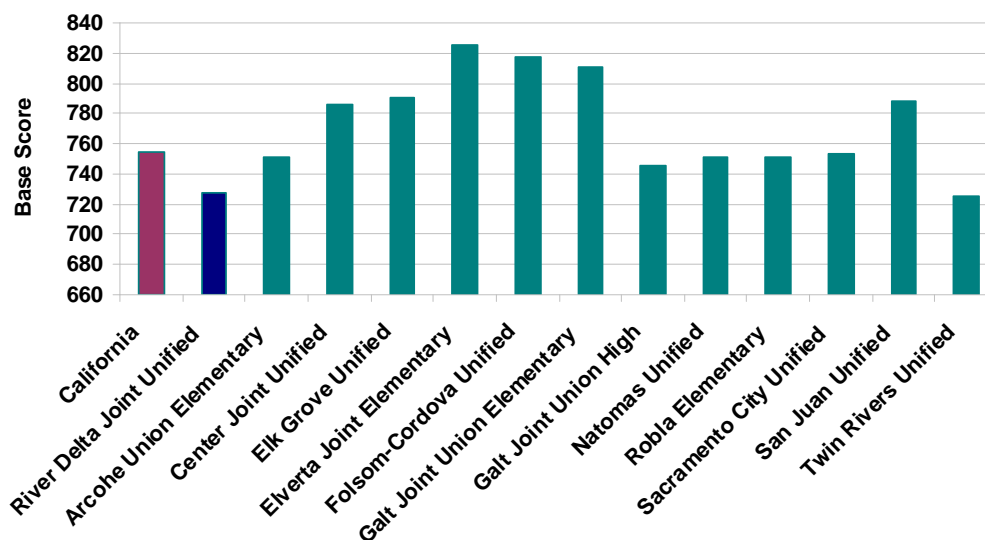
Figure 37 River Delta United Enrollment Trend



3.3.2 Performance Indicators

The River Delta School District has a very good reputation for educational quality and civic contribution within the district's small, close-knit community. However, declining enrollment, school closures, and recent performance statistics indicate potential challenges. The figure below shows the Academic Performance Index (API) score for the River Delta School District in 2009/10, relative to other schools and California overall.¹³¹ As shown, River Delta has among the lowest API scores in the region, substantially lower than those in California overall.

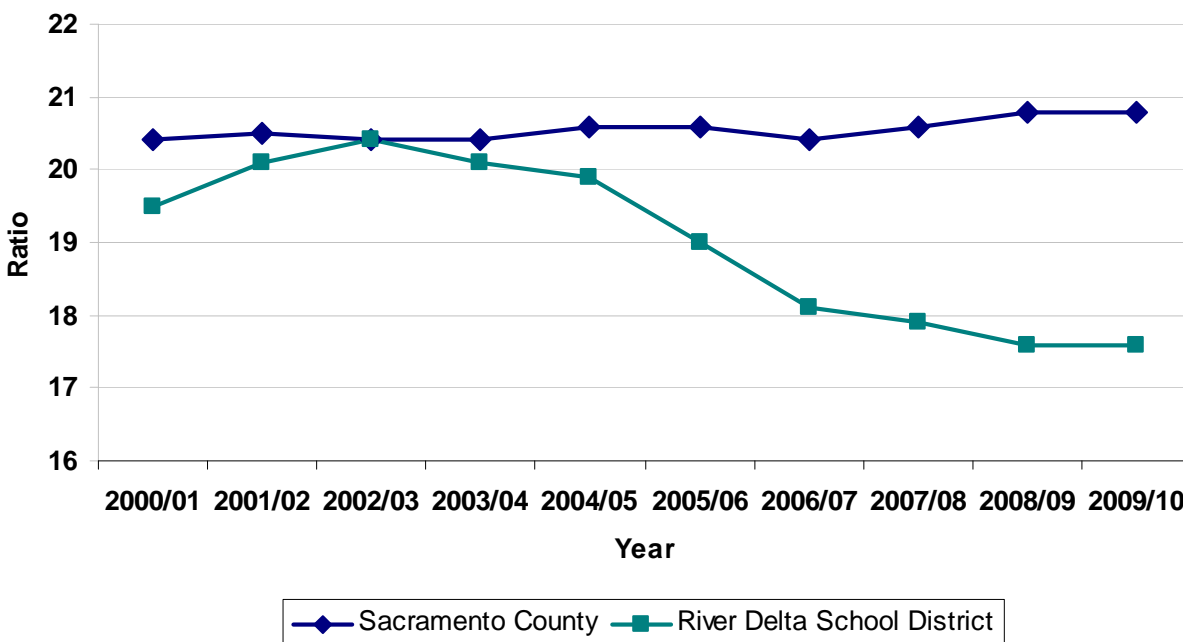
Figure 38 Academic Performance Index (API) Scores, 2009-10



¹³¹ The API is a single number, ranging from a low of 200 to a high of 1000, which reflects a school's or school district's performance level, based on the results of statewide testing. Its purpose is to measure the academic performance and growth of schools. The API is calculated by converting a student's performance on statewide assessments across multiple content areas into points on the API scale. These points are then averaged across all students and all tests.

The student-teacher ratios in River Delta indicate a well-staffed district. The figure below shows student-teacher ratios at River Delta compared to the rest of Sacramento County over time beginning in 2000/01. As shown, these ratios were similar until 2002/03, at which point the student-teacher ratios at River Delta began to decline, indicating more teachers were available to students. This ratio was last reported at approximately 18 students per teacher, which is the lowest figure as compared to other school districts in the Sacramento region.

Figure 39 Student-Teacher Ratios, River Delta School District and Sacramento County



In 2005, the Clarksburg elementary school was closed down and reopened several years later as a charter school, which is under the budgetary guidance of the River Delta School District, but operates largely autonomously.

4 Outcomes and Strategies under Baseline Conditions

Note to reviewers: this section to be developed

5 Impact of Policy Scenarios

Note to reviewers: this section under development

The policy scenarios that have been discussed elsewhere in this report may have impacts on local government service providers. More specifically, scenarios related to conveyance, habitat, and levees could create modest indirect impacts. However, it has not been identified that these scenarios would have substantial direct impacts upon local government services. Regulatory scenarios, however—particularly scenarios that enhance population growth and development—likely would have a significant impact upon local government services provider.